



## Hang Up on “Rachel”

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*Editor’s Note: A factsheet about robocalls is available on the DATCP website here:*

<http://datcp.wi.gov/uploads/Consumer/pdf/Robocalls300.pdf>.

MADISON – If you’ve had enough calls from “Rachel” at “Card Services” to last you a lifetime, you are not alone.

The automated telephone scams with offers of reduced credit card interest rates are plaguing consumers nationwide. These “robocalls” are both illegal and extremely difficult to stop.

“The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) is well aware of this issue and is fighting to stop these scammers,” said Sandy Chalmers, Division Administrator for Trade and Consumer Protection. “Because a number of these calls originate from overseas, it is difficult to track the calls and to build a case against these companies.”

Despite these issues, the FTC won three separate judgments against robocall scammers in February alone.

“The FTC recently won a judgment against a robocall ring that defrauded more than 1,300 people of around \$1,000 apiece for bogus credit assistance,” added Chalmers. “That is \$13 million stolen from the public, not to mention the incredible inconvenience of the endless robocalls that led to that point.”

The FTC also won judgments in February against two companies who provided automated calling equipment and expertise to scammers, allowing them to send out upwards of one million illegal prerecorded calls per day to consumers around the country – including those on the National Do Not Call Registry.

“Even if you receive an unexpected call that appears to be from Wisconsin or an agency like the IRS, don’t be fooled by your caller ID,” said Sandy Chalmers, Division Administrator of Trade and Consumer Protection. “These scammers have the ability to manipulate the caller ID entry for their phone calls, making them even more difficult to track.”

While you may not be able to stop these illegal calls, you can take some simple steps to avoid being targeted:

- If you pick up a robocall, hang up immediately.
- Don’t pick up a call from a number you do not recognize. Let it go to voicemail (the robocalls will not leave a voicemail).
- Never press a number during the recordings to be “removed from their list” or to speak to a representative. By taking either action, you have verified to the computer that dialed you that your number is active and that you are liable to pick up an unsolicited call.
- The robocalls are part of a scam. The “service” being advertised in the call cannot save you money...in fact, the real goal of the call is to collect your number to sell to other scammers or to collect your credit card numbers.
- If you receive a robocall, you can file a complaint with Wisconsin’s Bureau of Consumer Protection. Filing a complaint will not stop the calls in the short term, but because Consumer Protection turns robocall complaints over to the FTC, your complaint may assist the FTC in its national investigation.

(MORE)

To download a .pdf copy of a Consumer Protection factsheet about robocalls, visit <http://datcp.wi.gov/uploads/Consumer/pdf/Robocalls300.pdf>.

For more information or to file a consumer complaint, contact the Bureau of Consumer Protection on the web at [datcp.wisconsin.gov](http://datcp.wisconsin.gov), via email at [datcphotline@wi.gov](mailto:datcphotline@wi.gov) or by phone at 800-422-7128.

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